

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Workers and employers impacted by Thanksgiving weekend fire have quick access to government assistance

SACRAMENTO – Employees unable to work and employers whose businesses were disrupted by the Thanksgiving weekend Corral fire in Malibu will receive special benefits from state and federal governments.

Eligible workers will be able to collect a full two weeks of regular unemployment insurance (UI) benefits on their first check thanks to a waiver by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger of the usual one-week waiting period. In addition, the federal government is offering Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) to workers who are not eligible for regular UI benefits.

The state Employment Development Department (EDD), which administers the UI and DUA programs in California, is also offering employers affected by the fire a 60-day extension to file their state payroll reports and to deposit state payroll taxes with the department without penalty or interest.

The deadline for filing DUA claims related to the Corral fire is January 9, 2008. That's the same filing deadline as for those victims of the October wildfires in Southern California.

"We're happy to quickly extend these services quickly to those who are struggling to overcome the personal and financial damage caused by the recent Malibu fire," EDD Director Patrick Henning said. "EDD is able to use the pre-existing disaster declarations in Southern California to speed the availability of this assistance."

DUA is offered to workers who have a legal right to work in the United States but are not eligible for regular UI benefits, including the self-employed, workers who are unable to establish a valid regular UI claim and individuals who have exhausted their UI claim benefits. DUA is also available to people unable to reach work because of the wildfire, those whose scheduled work assignment was canceled because of the fire and people unable to work because of an injury caused by the fire.

The fastest and easiest way to file claims for UI and DUA benefits is on-line at <http://www.edd.ca.gov/fleclaim.htm>. Claimants can also file via the telephone numbers listed below:

English..... 1-800-300-5616

Spanish..... 1-800-326-8937

Cantonese..... 1-800-547-3506

Mandarin..... 1-866-303-0706

Vietnamese..... 1-800-547-2058

TTY (non-voice)..... 1-800-815-9387

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